Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 11 January 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

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General debate (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Ms. RIVERA (Costa Rica) said that the Amendment Conference was a historic event. Costa Rica believed that, in order to halt the nuclear-arms race and subsequently eliminate such weapons, it was necessary to halt nuclear tests, including underground ones.

2. Costa Rica urged the original parties to the partial test-ban Treaty to undertake joint efforts in order to carry out the tasks facing the Conference. Otherwise, future generations would be confronted by the threat of a nuclear catastrophe and the destruction of the entire planet.

3. A comprehensive test-ban treaty was an urgent necessity, and Costa Rica wished to state that it would vote in favour of amending the Moscow Treaty.

4. Mr. KAKOURIS (Cyprus) said that the Conference was being held against the backdrop of major changes on the international political scene, the end of the cold war, which had been the root cause of the spiraling arms race. Nevertheless, the prospects for the establishment of a new world order were being overshadowed by regional conflicts, the very real threat of war in the Gulf and continued nuclear-weapon testing.

5. The commitment undertaken by the original States parties to the Moscow Treaty to seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time and continue negotiations to that end was as relevant today as in 1963. The urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban had been repeatedly emphasized in various United Nations resolutions. Nevertheless, despite the general recognition of the destructive nature of nuclear weapons and the fact that a nuclear war could not be won, nuclear testing continued.

6. The emerging international political structure was increasingly being based on dialogue and co-operation, not confrontation and mistrust. That, together with the signing of a number of disarmament and arms-reduction agreements, was creating conditions for a transition towards complete nuclear disarmament by transforming the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Cyprus welcomed all initiatives and agreements designed to make the world safer and expressed particular satisfaction at the recent agreement between Argentina and Brazil pledging not to pursue the development of nuclear weapons. All those agreements, however, would remain half-measures, if testing continued since that would lead to the further improvement of nuclear weapons and a new spiral in the arms race and also have a negative impact on the prevention of horizontal nuclear proliferation.

7. There was a direct link between a comprehensive nuclear-test ban and the non-proliferation régime. One of the dangers of continued testing by the nuclear Powers was that it might induce countries on the threshold of acquiring nuclear weapons to join the nuclear club and their example might be followed by other

(Mr. Kakouris, Cyprus)

States. Current technological and scientific methods made it possible to solve the problem of verification, which in the past had been the stumbling block to attaining a comprehensive test ban. His delegation hoped that the signing of the verification protocols to the 1974 and the 1976 Treaties between the United States and the Soviet Union would help solve that problem. The significant efforts of the Group of Scientific Experts, established by the Conference on Disarmament and also the findings set forth in the study on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification (document A/45/372) should be given greater attention.

3. Public awareness of the inherent dangers of a nuclear disaster, for example, including those linked to the Chernobyl tragedy, had been heightened in recent years. The adverse effects of tests on health and plant and animal life had been clearly identified in the comprehensive study on nuclear weapons (document A/45/373). The active contribution by the various non-governmental organizations that promoted the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty helped focus public opinion on that problem.

9. The task of concluding such a treaty was not an easy one. Although divergent views continued to exist, his delegation felt that under current circumstances words could be transformed into deeds with the necessary political will. In 1984, the Secretary-General had pointed out that a comprehensive test-ban treaty was the litmus test of the real willingness of States to pursue nuclear disarmament. The Amendment Conference was also such a litmus test and the opportunity that it provided should not be missed.

10. Mr. LUNA (Peru) said that six non-aligned non-nuclear countries, including Peru, had assumed the historic responsibility for resuming international negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test ban and had proposed an amendment to the Moscow Treaty. The new international situation demonstrated that there was no longer any need to conduct nuclear tests. In that regard, it should be stressed that the resources allocated for the development of nuclear weapons could be utilized in order to expand the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Since 1963, the nuclear threat had only increased and nuclear tests were very closely linked to the development of nuclear capability. Accordingly, Peru advocated the complete cessation of such tests.

11. Although his country recognized and respected the obligations under the Moscow Treaty, it considered that all States had an equal right to seek to change or amend the Treaty, particularly in view of the fact that it was a question involving the entire international community. Peru was prepared to consider constructively all proposals that helped to achieve the goals of the Conference. Consideration should be given to questions relating to a draft protocol on verification, although the discussion of the amendment should not be linked to success in other areas. It should be kept in mind that the participants at the Conference would be discussing not merely a legal document, but the prospects for a new international order.

12. Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, signed at Moscow in 1963, had been the first step towards halting the refinement of nuclear weapons, one of the corner-stones of the nuclear-arms race. Its significance could not be overestimated and the Treaty would be greatly strengthened if all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, adhered to it.

13. Settling the issue of the complete cessation of nuclear testing had become a priority for mankind and demanded immediate action. His Government attached the utmost importance to that issue. The declaration on the State sovereignty of the Ukraine, adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR on 16 July 1990, proclaimed the country's intention of becoming a permanently neutral State in future, one which did not take part in military blocs and adhered to three nuclear-free principles - not to take, not to produce and not to acquire nuclear weapons. The Ukraine was resolutely in favour of banning nuclear tests at the earliest date. It was not convinced by the arguments of those States that claimed that a comprehensive test ban was a "long-term goal". Such an approach was reflected in the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Ukraine in the First Committee at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

14. The main reason for the failure to settle the issue of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban was lack of political will on the part of some nuclear States to take that step. Any problems in that connection could be solved through joint efforts and to everyone's satisfaction. The proposal under discussion at the present Conference - to extend the 1963 Moscow Treaty to cover underground testing - would mean a complete ban on nuclear-weapon tests. It was important that discussion of the issue in that forum should be geared from the outset towards a joint search for the best solution and the elaboration of universally acceptable practical measures. The Ukrainian SSR believed that use must be made of all possible channels that would enable progress to be made towards early settlement of the issue of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. To that end, both bilateral and multilateral negotiating channels must be put into operation and must complement each other organically. A step-by-step approach was also possible, provided that it was aimed at the early achievement of a comprehensive ban.

15. His delegation placed great hopes in the Ad Hoc Committee on a nuclear-test ban established within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. One very useful measure would be a moratorium on testing to which all the nuclear Powers would adhere on a reciprocal basis. The proposal on the immediate cessation of nuclear testing and the holding of a parliamentary referendum in that connection deserved attention. His delegation was prepared to support any verification measures which would create reliable guarantees of compliance with a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Such measures must include the methods enumerated in the draft basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon-tests: a seismic verification system, verification of airborne radioactivity and on-site inspections. In addition, use could be made of the corresponding elements of the verification mechanisms for the 1974 and 1976 Treaties recently worked out at the Soviet-American talks.

16. Mr. TAEB (Afghanistan) noted that the convening of the Amendment Conference reflected the desire of the majority of States parties to the partial test-ban Treaty to achieve the goal proclaimed in its preamble, namely "the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time" in all environments and by all States. The many resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations and the activities of the Conference on Disarmament and the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban established thereunder in 1990 were all designed to contribute to the attainment of that goal.

17. The present favourable international climate offered an historic opportunity to settle that fundamental issue in the field of the nuclear-arms race, and the signing of the INF Treaty, the Treaty on the Reduction of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the verification protocols to the 1974 and 1976 threshold test-ban Treaties paved the way for further movement towards general and complete disarmament. All that was needed was the necessary political will.

18. There were no longer any technological obstacles to a comprehensive test ban: a verification mechanism could be set up that included seismic monitoring, the measurement of atmospheric radioactivity and on-site inspections.

19. A comprehensive ban on nuclear tests would also strengthen the non-proliferation régime and its universality. Some non-nuclear States refused to adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty, alleging that it was discriminatory. While that position was totally unacceptable, it should be noted that the nuclear States were not fulfilling their commitment to work seriously for a comprehensive test ban.

20. His country supported the amendment proposed by the six countries and believed that the international community should continue its efforts to secure the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

21. Mr. FRANCESE (Italy) said that in the course of the negotiations that had led to the conclusion of the partial test-ban Treaty, it had been perceived that the opportunity of concluding a comprehensive test ban already existed. Attempts made at the time to achieve that goal had failed for two basic reasons: limited verification possibilities and the distrust prevailing in East-West relations.

22. By now, verification technologies had greatly progressed, making the detection of underground nuclear explosions far more reliable than in the 1950s or 1960s. Moreover, the political environment had largely changed. As a result, on-site inspections now appeared acceptable and the principle of co-operation in the field of verification had replaced the earlier distrust and confrontation. A comprehensive test ban was therefore a more realistic goal now than at any time in the past 30 years. The re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee at Geneva in 1990 was a politically significant step in that direction.

23. Despite its limited achievements, the Conference on Disarmament remained the appropriate forum for in-depth consideration of the issue of a comprehensive test ban in all its aspects. The experience acquired in recent years and the unprecedented progress achieved in arms control, especially within the framework of

(Mr. Francese, Italy)

East-West relations, had proved that a step-by-step approach was essential in order to achieve concrete and lasting results.

24. With the conclusion of the INF Treaty, the seeds had been sown for an irreversible reduction, at least in numbers, in the two largest nuclear arsenals; a START agreement was expected to further limit the size of those arsenals. With the ratification of the threshold test-ban Treaties, the United States and the Soviet Union had begun a process of joint control and further limitation of nuclear tests.

25. Although the process of reducing nuclear weapons had been initiated by the visible efforts of the two depositories of the largest arsenals on earth, it could not continue without the determined support of the whole international community. A comprehensive test ban could be achieved only through comparable and proportionate efforts by all parties concerned.

26. His Government believed that the Conference would best serve its objective if it reached a better understanding of the motives for States parties' common adherence to the partial test-ban Treaty and of the reasons why they all subscribed to the principle that a comprehensive test ban was necessary.

27. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic) said that a comprehensive test ban had been called for by all countries and peoples seeking to promote peace and stability and that the success of the current Conference would create favourable conditions for preparing for and holding the Fifth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995.

28. The questions of a comprehensive test ban and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons were indivisibly linked. The refusal to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty was at variance with obligations under the non-proliferation Treaty and other international agreements and conventions. The Amendment Conference, therefore, was part of the overall effort to achieve general and complete disarmament, particularly with regard to nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction.

29. As a non-aligned country, Syria fully complied with the provisions of the partial test-ban Treaty. Nevertheless, the shortcoming of the Treaty was that the nuclear Powers had not been able to reach agreement on halting underground tests in spite of all the efforts of the non-aligned countries in that regard. Failure to adopt the amendment to the Treaty would weaken the non-proliferation régime and encourage certain States not to carry out its provisions.

30. At their meeting at the highest level in Belgrade in 1989, the non-aligned countries had called upon the three Depositary States of the Treaty to demonstrate greater flexibility in order to guarantee the continued effectiveness of the non-proliferation régime. Most delegations at the current Conference had pointed out that a speedy halt to testing would be an important step towards eliminating the threat of the qualitative improvement and development of new weapon systems and

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

would promote the non-proliferation of such weapon systems. The amendment proposed by the six countries should be considered and adopted because it was in keeping with the interests of all participants at the Conference. Furthermore, it was necessary to step up the work of the Ad Hoc Committee in the Conference on Disarmament in order to follow up the implementation of General Assembly resolution 43/50.

31. A comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons and the non-proliferation régime constituted the basis for establishing a new system of international security. At the current Conference, it was necessary to strengthen the non-proliferation régime, which was a further measure for increasing the effectiveness of a comprehensive test ban.

32. Since the partial test-ban Treaty expired in four years, negotiations should be conducted in order to reach agreement on banning tests in all environments and for all time in order to prevent the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons.

33. Syria had proposed the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East at the Paris Conference on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In 1990 in Algeria, the Mediterranean countries had adopted the Egyptian initiative and the proposal by Syria concerning the transformation of the Mediterranean region into a nuclear-weapon-free zone under effective international control. It was paradoxical that Israel, which had signed the partial test-ban Treaty in 1963, had not yet signed and ratified the non-proliferation Treaty, apparently in order to plan and carry out nuclear-weapon tests. That created a threat to peace and security in the region.

34. The world community was increasingly aware of the danger which nuclear testing posed to the environment and health. Nevertheless, since 1963, 1,300 nuclear-weapon tests had been conducted, 85 per cent of which by the Depositary States. In the Pacific Ocean basin alone, 17 nuclear explosions had been carried out, resulting in contamination of the Ocean, destruction of marine resources, and also damage to the health of the population in the region.

35. Syria was prepared to contribute to the work of the bodies to be set up at the Conference and had high regard for the work of non-governmental organizations in providing valuable information and informing the general public.

36. Mr. KOSTOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation was participating in the Conference in the belief that the nuclear threat remained one of the foremost global challenges facing mankind. Bulgaria welcomed the beginning of real nuclear disarmament initiated by the Soviet Union and the United States. The elimination of an entire class of nuclear weapons, the signing of the agreement on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe and the anticipated conclusion of a treaty on strategic offensive weapons had demonstrated what could be achieved by means of political vision and statesmanship.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

37. Bulgaria had acceded to the partial test-ban Treaty on the day on which it had been opened for signature. The Treaty had played and was continuing to play a substantial role in limiting nuclear-weapon tests, especially from the ecological point of view. At the same time, his country remained firmly committed to the goal of a comprehensive test ban in full conformity with the provisions and obligations set forth in the partial test-ban Treaty and the non-proliferation Treaty.

38. For almost three decades, the question of a comprehensive test ban had occupied an important place on the international disarmament agenda. It was clear, however, that the failure to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty would not be due to a lack of awareness of the importance and urgency of that problem. The Treaty had always been regarded as an effective means of curbing the arms race and the qualitative development and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

39. A comprehensive test-ban treaty could be achieved in one step or in several steps. Bulgaria felt that the second approach was more realistic. His delegation welcomed the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. Furthermore, that problem had a direct bearing on the basic security interests of many States and alliances and that fact should also be taken into account.

40. Bulgaria hoped that the conclusion in June 1990 of the protocols to the threshold test-ban Treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty would lead to further progress towards the achievement of a comprehensive test ban.

41. The question of verification was undoubtedly very important. It was now quite clear that the technical questions relating to the monitoring of compliance with a comprehensive test-ban treaty had been largely resolved.

42. Bulgaria approached the issue of a comprehensive test ban in the broader context of nuclear weapons and nuclear non-proliferation. It supported the constant efforts to achieve the goals in that important area and was in favour of the earliest possible conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty on the basis of a stage-by-stage approach. His delegation shared the view expressed by many delegations that the nuclear-weapon States should consider reducing the number and yield of their test explosions.

43. Bulgaria regarded the Conference as a starting-point for realizing a noble goal and hoped that it would generate specific ideas and the determination to move forward at the bilateral and the multilateral levels.

44. Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal) said that despite the significant efforts of the international community since the conclusion of the 1963 Moscow Treaty to achieve a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, there had still been no success in ending underground tests. Understanding the complexity of the issue, and taking into consideration the commitment of a number of States to the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and the problems of verification, her delegation none the less was convinced that political will and constructive dialogue would enable the ultimate goal to be achieved. Another important factor facilitating progress towards a

(Mrs. Diallo, Senegal)

comprehensive nuclear-test ban was the positive change in the international situation, the rapprochement between East and West and the progress in Soviet-American negotiations on disarmament and arms control. At the same time the crisis in the Gulf recalled to mind the serious dangers that still threatened peace and security and underscored the need for further efforts to achieve a comprehensive test ban. In that connection, her delegation noted with satisfaction the commitment of the Soviet Union to facilitating a comprehensive ban.

45. Senegal, which like other African countries was facing many serious problems, felt a special concern over the serious threat of nuclear weapons and the fatal consequences of nuclear testing. It had always favoured the reallocation of resources expended on military requirements to the fight against hunger, disease, poverty and indebtedness. Supporting all initiatives and efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, Senegal consistently endorsed the establishment of nuclear-free zones and particularly the declaration of the African continent as such a zone.

46. Amendment of the 1963 Treaty and the establishment of effective verification machinery would facilitate the achievement of those goals and the strengthening of a non-proliferation system. In recognition of the fact that the Conference would not have enough time to achieve that goal, it would be useful to envisage the establishment of a working group to continue consideration of the issue. In conclusion, she urged the States parties to the Treaty to do their utmost to ensure that the Conference would pave the way for a compromise, with due regard for the specific interests of the respective States and the need to strengthen peace and international security.

47. Mr. GHAREKHAN (India) said that, when the partial test-ban Treaty had been signed in 1963, the international community had hoped that it would be followed by other agreements, including a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Unfortunately those hopes had failed to materialize. Even though the signing of the Treaty had resulted in a significant reduction in the radioactive contamination of the atmosphere, oceans and land, an end to the qualitative and quantitative nuclear-arms race had not been achieved. It had been estimated that in the period from the signature of the Treaty until 1989 more than 1,270 tests had been conducted and that over the past five years the nuclear-weapon States had conducted 172 nuclear tests.

48. The Conference was the appropriate forum for considering the problem of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. All aspects of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty had already been studied in detail and all that remained for the Conference to do was to stimulate sufficient political will on the part of the States parties for the amendment to be adopted. The key to success was held by the nuclear-weapon States. Negotiations were under way between the United States and the Soviet Union on a number of nuclear arms control agreements, but none of them prohibited the upgrading of existing weapons systems.

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

49. In the earlier consideration of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, peaceful nuclear explosions had always been assigned a separate role. The original intention had been to maintain a dividing-line between nuclear explosions for military purposes, which were to be prohibited entirely, and nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, to be allowed under certain conditions. At the same time doubts had been raised in recent years about the utility of peaceful nuclear explosions.

50. His delegation felt that a comprehensive test ban played a positive role and that an opportune moment had arrived to achieve agreement on the drafting of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

51. Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) said that Belgium supported a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. That had been demonstrated with the utmost clarity in the General Assembly and in other international forums. Belgium was a State party to the partial test-ban Treaty and to the non-proliferation Treaty. It had refrained from possessing any nuclear explosive devices. That, however, did not mean that it was not interested in the discontinuance of nuclear tests. On the contrary, the Belgian Government regarded the conclusion of a treaty on the discontinuance of nuclear tests as one of the goals of arms limitation. The tasks of the Government of Belgium in the area of disarmament, which had been defined in 1988, were active support for the reduction of arsenals of strategic nuclear weapons to achieve a balance at the lowest possible level and the conclusion of a treaty on the discontinuance of nuclear tests.

52. Those goals, together with the reduction of short-range nuclear weapons, fell within the framework of a general policy of peace and security, which also provided for co-operation within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and defining security in Western Europe.

53. Belgium felt that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, verification of which would be ensured only with the help of seismic means of verification, did not provide guarantees comparable to those in the non-proliferation Treaty. That treaty could not be considered an alternative to the non-proliferation Treaty. An effective international system for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was still an integral component of international security.

54. A comprehensive test-ban treaty did not solve the problem of the reduction of nuclear arsenals. His Government fully supported negotiations on strategic offensive arms and favoured the reduction of nuclear-weapon stockpiles in Europe.

55. As for the problem of verification, the most appropriate forum for considering it was the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, especially if renewal of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban was taken into consideration.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water

PTBT/CONF/SR.8
17 January 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 11 January 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

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General debate (continued)

Credentials of representatives to the Conference (continued)

(a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. BILOA TANG (Cameroon) said that, since the signing of the partial test-ban Treaty, the number of nuclear tests had in fact increased. Despite the commitments made by the parties to the Treaty, no decisive measures had been adopted, either by the Conference on Disarmament or within the framework of bilateral or trilateral negotiations, to bring and end to nuclear-weapon testing. The continuation of an unbridled arms race, based on the policy of nuclear deterrence, had consumed vast economic and financial resources, while the countries of the third world continued to face non-nuclear threats such as hunger, poverty, debt, illiteracy and disease.

2. Accordingly, the Amendment Conference offered the first opportunity in many years to initiate into serious multilateral negotiations with a view to the adoption of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In view of the marked improvement in the international climate, the time had come to adopt such a treaty. That was the only way to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to prevent the pollution of the seas, the atmosphere and outer space. He welcomed the progress made in recent years in the field of disarmament, as shown by the INF Treaty and the verification protocols signed by the United States and the Soviet Union. On that basis, the Amendment Conference should be able to overcome difficulties and differences in approach so as to achieve the goal of a comprehensive test ban.

3. The international community had acquired solid experience in the verification of compliance with disarmament agreements. It was now recognized that, with existing technology, compliance with a comprehensive test ban could be verified with a high degree of accuracy.

4. For that reason, he was convinced that a comprehensive, universal and verifiable nuclear test ban could be achieved. The Amendment Conference was the only forum in which States parties could discuss the conversion of the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It was important, therefore, to seize the opportunity thus afforded to strengthen international co-operation and dialogue with regard to such a crucial issue, rather than deferring consideration of the matter to other, small bodies or choosing the so-called step-by-step approach. That approach had two drawbacks: it did not prevent the qualitative development of nuclear weapons, and it postponed indefinitely the multilateral negotiations which could lead to a complete and immediate ban.

5. U THAUNG TUN (Myanmar) said that, 27 years after the signing of the partial test-ban Treaty and 20 years after the entry into force of the non-proliferation Treaty, the world was no closer to a comprehensive test ban. That was all the more disappointing in that the parties to the partial test-ban Treaty had committed themselves to seeking an end to nuclear-weapon-test explosions for all time. Discussions of a comprehensive test ban had been carried on bilaterally, trilaterally and multilaterally, but the meetings in question had been unproductive.

(U Thaung Tun, Myanmar)

6. His country, like the majority of States attending the Amendment Conference, attached great importance to a nuclear test ban and had supported all efforts to achieve a comprehensive and verifiable ban since 1962. If such a vital step towards disarmament had not been taken, it was not for lack of sustained efforts on the part of the international community; rather, it was because the depository States had failed to fulfil their obligations under the partial test-ban Treaty and the non-proliferation Treaty. Regrettably, those States still regarded a comprehensive test ban as a goal to be achieved later rather than sooner. That was why no tangible results had been achieved despite the General Assembly's adoption of some 70 resolutions on the issue. Similar efforts within the Conference on Disarmament had also been thwarted, and even the establishment within that body of an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban with a proper negotiating mandate had persistently been blocked. Although mention was frequently made of the successful bilateral negotiations which had led to the signing of the threshold test-ban Treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty, those instruments were more concerned with setting agreed limits to the explosive yields of underground tests than with banning such tests.

7. Paradoxically, the States which currently counselled a step-by-step approach were the very ones which in 1962 had stated that a comprehensive test-ban treaty was the key to disarmament, since it would be an important first step in bringing the arms race under control. Despite such declarations, a comprehensive test ban had not been achieved, allegedly because of differences with regard to the number of on-site inspections.

8. For the first time since the invention of nuclear weapons, serious efforts were being made to curb the unbridled nuclear-arms race. Negotiations on the reduction of strategic arms were making encouraging headway. While recent developments had given rise to hopes for a more peaceful world, the international community should not lose sight of the dangers that still lay ahead. The world was threatened with conflicts which might destabilize global peace. The threat of war looming over the Gulf region served as a reminder of the possibility that weapons of mass destruction might be used in an open conflict. The task of achieving nuclear disarmament was therefore more urgent than ever.

9. At the current stage, nuclear tests served only to develop new and more effective weapons of mass destruction. The time had come to discard outmoded doctrines and overcome suspicions bred by ideological rivalry and military confrontation. There was broad agreement that a comprehensive and verifiable test ban would be a vital step towards bringing about a world free of nuclear weapons. Although the difficulties relating to verification were real and formidable, they were not insurmountable and should no longer be used as a pretext for failing to take action. Accordingly, current efforts must continue in order to bring about a breakthrough towards a comprehensive test ban.

10. Mr. ALCANTARA (Dominican Republic) said that, while his country had never participated in the nuclear-arms race, it had always expressed its concern at the threat which nuclear weapons posed to mankind and to the world environment. His country had voiced its opposition to the nuclear-arms race in all international

(Mr. Alcantara, Dominican Republic)

forums and had unconditionally supported the non-proliferation Treaty and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco).

11. As a result of nuclear weapons, the world was divided in various ways: between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States; between nuclear-weapon States which believed that testing was necessary and States which believed that all nuclear tests should be discontinued in order to prevent the qualitative development of nuclear weapons and to discourage their inclusion in military deterrence strategies; between States which could not agree to a comprehensive test ban because they did not trust the existing verification mechanisms and States which feared that in the future only nuclear weapons would be reliable, and that they would be used on the battlefield at the first opportunity; between nuclear-weapon States which were determined to prevent other countries from developing such weapons, even at the risk of nuclear war, and other States - the majority - which were promoting the concept of a comprehensive test ban as an important step towards the ultimate goal of world-wide nuclear disarmament.

12. Until such time as a comprehensive test-ban treaty could be signed, the nuclear-weapon States should unilaterally suspend all nuclear-test explosions and pursue all efforts to negotiate such a treaty under the auspices of the Amendment Conference, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/50. He also supported the idea of including in the provisional agenda of the Assembly's forty-sixth session an item entitled "Amendment to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water". The prohibition of underground nuclear tests would help to slow the development of new nuclear weapons and would substantially reduce nuclear arsenals. It would also strengthen the efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and would reduce the risks of future environmental pollution.

13. In view of the complex and sensitive nature of the issues under discussion at the Amendment Conference, particularly the question of verification, there was a need for prolonged discussions and negotiations in order to persuade the nuclear-weapon States to declare a moratorium on testing while the details of verification were being worked out. For that reason, the Amendment Conference should not take a final vote on the question under consideration, but should agree to reconvene in a year or two, having established a working group to co-ordinate matters in the mean time.

14. Mr. ALMUAKKAF (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the accumulation of nuclear arsenals, far from constituting a deterrent, increased the risks of a devastating war. The objective to which all must aspire was a comprehensive nuclear-test ban subject to effective international verification.

15. The cold war had given way to an era of unprecedented harmony in international relations, yet it had still not been possible to eliminate the threats posed to international peace and security by the existence of enormous quantities of weapons of mass destruction. Those threats were increased by the continued production,

(Mr. Almuakkaf, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

development, stockpiling and testing of nuclear arms by the nuclear-weapon States. His delegation therefore attached particular importance to the speedy conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The States parties to the non-proliferation Treaty had stated their determination to conclude such a treaty at the earliest opportunity but the nuclear-weapon States were not displaying the political will required for such action. His delegation urged all States to take appropriate measures to end the testing of nuclear weapons as a matter of urgency.

16. The considerable progress made in negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union concerning reductions in their strategic offensive arms, as well as their conventional forces in Europe, was to be welcomed. The Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, had a major role to play in bringing about a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. His delegation hoped that the newly re-established Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban would begin work immediately with a broader mandate. It also supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world.

17. Noting the complementary relationship between the partial test-ban Treaty and the non-proliferation Treaty, his delegation hoped that the current Conference would succeed in formulating a comprehensive test-ban treaty which would provide similar support for the non-proliferation Treaty. Such hopes would, however, remain remote so long as two nuclear-weapon States refused to join in the agreement on such a ban. In that connection, his delegation regretted that the Fourth Review Conference for the non-proliferation Treaty had failed to agree on a final declaration.

18. In conclusion, his country attached particular importance to the establishment of machinery for the effective verification of all nuclear tests. Following the improvement of seismic techniques, which constituted the best means of monitoring tests at the international level, there could be no justification for the arguments against a comprehensive ban advanced by certain nuclear-weapon States.

19. Mr. FUENTES IBAÑEZ (Bolivia) said that, since the signing of the partial test-ban Treaty, no progress had been made towards banning nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. Furthermore, the formal commitment to establish verification of underground nuclear tests, which was now feasible, had not been carried out. With the assistance of the International Atomic Energy Agency it would not be difficult to set up a data bank in order to ensure reliable verification.

20. The countries that conducted nuclear-weapon tests invoked security reasons to justify such tests. However, now that the cold war had come to an end, there was no justification for increasing nuclear arsenals to serve as a deterrent to war. Nuclear deterrence was based on terror and constituted a violation of State sovereignty. In view of the preliminary disarmament agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union and the new atmosphere of international co-operation

(Mr. Fuentes Ibañez, Bolivia)

and mutual trust, conditions were propitious for amending the partial test-ban Treaty. To that end, the structure of the Amendment Conference should be maintained and work should continue so that the Conference could be reconvened at the latest in 1992.

21. Mr. PEDAUYE (Spain) said that Spain had supported the vast majority of United Nations resolutions calling for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, particularly the proposals put forward by Australia and New Zealand in the First Committee every year since 1972. Since 1964, Spain had been a party to the partial test-ban Treaty. In 1986, it had acceded to the non-proliferation Treaty.

22. The partial-test-ban Treaty was outstanding in that the number of States parties to it had steadily increased and its provisions had never been violated. One reason for its success was that it was realistic and pragmatic. Operating on the premise that a complete cessation of nuclear testing could not be achieved overnight, its approach was less ambitious and sought to achieve the desired goal in stages.

23. Perhaps the most substantive obstacle to a comprehensive ban had to do with the complex and delicate balance of current international security arrangements. His delegation was convinced the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty was closely linked to achieving progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. In that connection, the best approach would be a gradual one. Therefore, the sudden conversion of the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive nuclear test-ban Treaty did not seem realistic for the time being. For one thing, it would exclude two of the five nuclear-weapon Powers, which were not parties to the partial test-ban Treaty. Moreover, a total cessation of testing which left arsenals intact until they became obsolete, could actually be destabilizing and increase nuclear risks.

24. His delegation had actively participated in the preparatory work for the Conference out of support for its underlying ideals. Spain was convinced, however, that in the immediate future the Conference served more as a valuable forum for the exchange of views than as a means to achieving a comprehensive ban.

25. Recent years had witnessed historic developments in the quest for disarmament. Outstanding among those developments was the conclusion of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), signed at Paris eight weeks earlier, the joint declaration by States parties of the two major military alliances, and the Charter of Paris for a new Europe, also signed at the Paris Summit Meeting of Heads of State or Government of the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. The INF Treaty, concluded in 1987, and its verification protocols had given fresh impetus to the disarmament process after 20 relatively uneventful years. The imminent conclusion of the first treaty substantially reducing strategic nuclear arms (START) and the re-establishment by the Conference on Disarmament of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban were also encouraging signs.

26. In the light of those developments, the Conference could serve as a catalyst for achieving a substantial reduction in nuclear arsenals and fostering specific

(Mr. Pedauye, Spain)

measures for a comprehensive test ban. Initiatives proposed by a number of delegations could be explored, such as timing of nuclear testing at greater intervals, reducing the thresholds permitted in each explosion and setting a nuclear-test ceiling which would decrease annually.

27. Mr. LEGWAILA (Botswana) said that his country attached the utmost importance to the partial test-ban Treaty and believed that the Amendment Conference provided an opportunity to explore ways of achieving a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. The Conference was taking place at a time of dynamic change throughout the world. The end of the cold war and other positive developments had given rise to the hope that mankind had emerged from the era marked by the balance of terror.

28. The ultimate objective of the Conference should be a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. Halting all nuclear tests was the only credible way to ensure nuclear non-proliferation. While not wishing to establish a linkage between the partial test-ban Treaty and the non-proliferation Treaty, Botswana stressed the need to recognize that a situation in which the nuclear-weapon States were allowed to have a monopoly on nuclear weapons was neither desirable nor fair. His country had an open and constructive approach towards the proposed amendment. The Conference should initiate the process of negotiations leading to the signing of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Botswana would have no difficulty accepting a step-by-step approach to a comprehensive test ban, if the nuclear-weapon States were prepared to commit themselves to that goal.

29. While his delegation was fully aware of the complex relationship between a comprehensive test ban and reliable verification arrangements, as well as the difficulties involved in the verification of compliance with obligations, it was nevertheless, convinced that the advances in science and technology would make it possible to ensure a verifiable nuclear-test ban. Botswana believed that the Amendment Conference had an important role to play in negotiations on a comprehensive test ban and appealed to States parties to the partial test-ban Treaty to ensure that that process was brought to its logical conclusion.

30. Mr. KENYON (United Kingdom) said that, with the total withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe and the implementation of the CFE Treaty, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had agreed that it could reduce its reliance on nuclear weapons. NATO members had also agreed, however, that since the future was uncertain, an appropriate combination of nuclear and conventional forces should be maintained. For the United Kingdom, that meant that security would continue to depend on deterrence, based, in part, on nuclear weapons - and that would entail a measure of nuclear testing.

31. While certain delegations might invoke the third preambular paragraph of the partial test-ban Treaty in that regard, his delegation wished to draw attention to the Treaty's second preambular paragraph, which placed a nuclear-test ban in the context of wider disarmament, and seemed to constitute the only realistic approach. The painful truth was that there was no instant means of dismantling nuclear-weapon systems, and that States dependent on such systems required time to

(Mr. Kenyon, United Kingdom)

ensure their security by other means. None the less, his delegation noted the encouraging progress in the area of arms control, including the INF Treaty, the CFE Treaty and the ongoing work towards a START treaty.

32. His delegation disagreed with the view that the possession of nuclear weapons by some States might prompt other States to pursue the same course. A State could develop a crude and highly dangerous weapon without testing, regardless of whether current nuclear-weapon States retained their capability. If the non-proliferation Treaty - to which Iraq was a party, moreover - was already supposed to protect against that eventuality, there was no guarantee that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would afford greater security. A more promising solution had been demonstrated in recent months by two nuclear-threshold States which had cast aside competition in favour of co-operating for peaceful purposes.

33. He now wished to comment on the statements by some delegations about the environmental impact of nuclear testing. The partial test-ban Treaty had laid the groundwork for the cessation of testing above ground, and the technology for containing underground testing was highly sophisticated. As a result, the problem of environmental damage at the testing site had been minimized. Indeed, according to a 1989 report from the United States Congress Office of Technology Assessment, total radioactive releases since 1970 would not pose a threat to public health, even in the immediate vicinity of the Nevada test site.

34. With regard to the question of nuclear-treat moratoria, and, in particular, the proposal by President Gorbachev, the United Kingdom was not at present prepared to give up testing. A moratorium would be a poor substitute for a properly-negotiated and effectively-verifiable treaty. Moreover, a moratorium without verification provisions could in itself undermine security.

35. While his delegation did not support converting the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, it did believe that the exchange of views at the Amendment Conference was a useful exercise. As his delegation had indicated at the Conference on Disarmament, it was not clear that verification of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would be fully reliable. While it was possible to distinguish between an earthquake and a nuclear-test explosion at relatively high yields, covert testing remained a distinct possibility. Further discussion of such highly-technical matters should be pursued at the Conference on Disarmament and, in particular, in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. For the past 15 years, the United Kingdom had actively participated in the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts of the Conference on Disarmament. While the United Kingdom Government was committed to a comprehensive test ban in the long term, it believed that confidence - in both the technical and the political sense - was a pre-condition for achieving that goal.

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONFERENCE (continued)

(a) APPOINTMENT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (continued)

36. Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius) was elected Vice-Chairman of the Credentials Committee by acclamation.

37. Belgium, Botswana, Colombia, Fiji and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were appointed members of the Credentials Committee.

38. The PRESIDENT appealed to States parties participating in the Conference that had not already done so to submit their representative's credentials to the Secretary-General of the Conference.

39. Mr. KHERADI (Secretary-General of the Conference) requested States parties that had participated in the Meeting for the Organization of the Conference and those participating in the Amendment Conference which had not already done so to pay their contributions in order to defray the cost of the Conference and the Meeting. Thus far, only a limited number of contributions had been paid. The Conference was not financed from the regular budget of the United Nations but was self-financing. In that connection, he wished to draw attention to rule 12 of the rules of procedure, on cost-sharing, and to the letter dated 20 August 1990 transmitted by the Controller of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.

Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water

PTBT/CONF/SR.9
23 January 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 18 January 1991, at 4 p.m.

President: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

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This record is subject to correction.

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Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

The meeting was called to order at 5.05 p.m.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF HIS MAJESTY OLAV V, KING OF NORWAY

1. On the proposal of the President, the participants in the Amendment Conference observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Majesty Olav V, King of Norway.

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONFERENCE (continued)

(b) REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (PTBT/CONF/12)

2. The PRESIDENT said that, following the preparation of the report of the Credentials Committee, credentials in due form had been received from the representatives of Colombia and Costa Rica.

3. Mr. GROOP (Finland), speaking as Chairman of the Credentials Committee, introduced the report of that Committee (PTBT/CONF/12). In paragraph 8, the reference to "paragraphs 4 and 6 above" should be amended to read "paragraphs 4, 6 and 7 above". The report indicated that at its second meeting the Credentials Committee had examined and accepted the credentials of the representatives of all 94 participating States parties, on the understanding that those States parties that had not yet submitted formal credentials for their representatives would communicate them to the Secretary-General of the Conference as soon as possible.

4. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Conference decided to take note of the report of the Credentials Committee.

5. It was so decided.

ADOPTION OF FINAL DOCUMENT/REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE (PTBT/CONF/L.1 and 2)

6. Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) said that there had unfortunately been no agreement on the content of a final declaration of the Conference or a statement by the President reflecting the outcome of the Conference. Draft decision PTBT/CONF/L.1 had therefore been proposed by 9 States, which had now been joined by Senegal. Following consultations on the draft decision, the sponsors had decided to revise the text so that it read:

> "Acknowledging the complex and complicated nature of certain aspects of a comprehensive test ban, especially those with regard to verification of compliance and possible sanctions against non-compliance, the States parties were of the view that further work needed to be undertaken. Accordingly, they agreed to mandate the President of the Conference to conduct consultations with a view to achieving progress on those issues and resuming the work of the Conference at an appropriate time."

7. He requested a recorded vote on draft decision PTBT/CONF/L.1, as orally revised.

8. Mr. KENYON (United Kingdom), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said he regretted that the Conference had failed to reach a consensus, owing to disagreement as to whether the amendment process was an appropriate means of achieving a comprehensive test ban. His delegation believed that the question of a comprehensive test ban would be best handled by the Conference on Disarmament. The international community had the opportunity to review the progress of the Conference on Disarmament through the annual report it submitted to the General Assembly. He wished to reaffirm the United Kingdom's adherence to the partial test-ban Treaty and its desire for an eventual comprehensive test ban. The United Kingdom would, however, vote against the draft decision under consideration.

9. Mr. GARCIA-MORITAN (Argentina) said that it was most regrettable that a vote was needed on the draft decision. His delegation would vote in favour of the revised draft.

10. Mr. SALANDER (Sweden) said that he regretted the Conference's inability to reach a consensus. However, he valued the intense efforts that had resulted in the revised draft decision, which took a variety of positions into account. Although the new text was not in complete conformity with his Government's position, he would vote in favour of it.

11. Mr. BEN-RAFAEL (Israel) said that, although a consensus had not been achieved, the Conference had provided a focus and impetus for the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

12. He had planned to state that the current international climate was conducive to the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty; however, disarmament priorities had shifted because of the eruption of war in the Persian Gulf two days earlier and the missile attacks that Iraq was currently launching against Israel. Those events underscored the urgency of the regional objective of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, particularly in view of the recent revelations of Iraq's nuclear aspirations. Although some Arab States had claimed they were in favour of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, they refused to open a dialogue with Israel on the issue. He urged all the States in the region to conduct direct negotiations with Israel to achieve that end.

13. With regard to the draft decision, his delegation had reservations on the modalities for achieving a comprehensive test ban, and would therefore abstain in the vote.

14. Mr. ERDOS (Hungary) said that the Conference had been unable to follow the usual pattern of adopting a final document by consensus, but its failure to reach a consensus was not without precedent. However, he was deeply disappointed by the unprecedented need to put the draft decision to a vote. Decisions relating to international security and disarmament should be adopted solely on the basis of the principle of consensus. His delegation could not accept the idea of voting on the issue, and would therefore abstain in the vote.

15. At the request of the representative of Mexico, a recorded vote was taken on draft decision PTBT/CONF/L.1, as orally revised.

In favour: Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Samoa, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey

16. Draft decision PTBT/CONF/L.1, as orally revised, was adopted by 74 votes to 2, with 19 abstentions.

17. Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde) said that, if his delegation had been present at the time of the vote, it would have voted in favour of the revised draft decision.

18. Ms. MASON (Canada), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said that her delegation attached great importance to the objective of an effective and verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty. Although the failure to reach a consensus was regrettable, the Conference had provided a useful opportunity for an exchange of views on the issue. She had been unable to support the draft decision because the text inaccurately stated that the States parties had agreed to mandate the President to take certain measures, when no such agreement had been reached. The voting process could not create an agreement, nor could it obviate the need for one. The full participation of all parties was essential to the multilateral disarmament process. She had therefore abstained in the vote on the draft decision.

19. Mr. HOEKEMA (Netherlands) said he regretted the lack of substantive results through consensus on such an important issue. Although his delegation had disagreed with the idea of holding a conference to consider an amendment that was unlikely to be adopted, it had participated in view of the importance of reviewing the question. He would have welcomed a declaration expressing the commitment of the States parties to the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, as well as the need for the Conference on Disarmament to continue its work in that area with determination. However, the revised draft decision went too far in referring to a "mandate" for the President of the Conference. His delegation had therefore abstained in the vote.

20. Mr. FRIEDRICH (Switzerland) said that his Government supported all efforts to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. However, it believed that the Conference on Disarmament was the most appropriate multilateral forum in which to pursue such efforts, because all five nuclear-weapon States were represented in that body. He had therefore abstained in the vote on the draft decision. It was regrettable that the Amendment Conference had been unable to adopt a final document by consensus. He hoped that the Conference on Disarmament would take into account the views expressed at the Amendment Conference, and that more countries would participate in the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts at the Conference on Disarmament.

21. Mr. KEMPEL (Austria) said that his country continued to attach the highest importance to the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty and to the need to examine a variety of unsolved problems relating to such a treaty. He had abstained in the vote on the draft decision because it sought to continue the work of the Conference in an unacceptable way and to reflect an agreement which had not, in fact, been reached. Although the ideal outcome of the Conference would have been the adoption of a final document by consensus, the Conference had nevertheless provided catalytic input for efforts to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

22. Ms. HOINKES (United States of America) said that her negative vote on the revised draft decision in no way reflected a lack of appreciation for the President's work during the Conference. Her Government attached the highest importance to the partial test-ban Treaty, and its opposition to the idea of amending the Treaty had been clear from the beginning of the Amendment Conference, which had not contributed to the continued viability of the partial test ban currently in effect. As a depositary of the Treaty, the United States had recognized the right of one third of the States parties to the Treaty to require the convening of the Amendment Conference. Despite its opposition to the amendment on both procedural and substantive grounds, the United States, as a party to the partial test-ban Treaty, had participated in the Amendment Conference and had listened carefully to the widely-varying views of the other States parties.

23. Although the United States remained committed to the long-term objective of a comprehensive test ban, such a ban could not be viewed in isolation from the current world situation and from the continued dependence of the United States on nuclear deterrence. However, her country looked forward to a world in which nuclear arsenals could be reduced and nuclear testing would not be required, and would therefore contribute to the efforts being made in the Conference on Disarmament to achieve an eventual comprehensive test-ban treaty.

24. Mr. GROOP (Finland) said that his country had long supported the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. His abstention in the vote on the draft decision reflected his views on the best means of achieving such a treaty, not on the desirability of the goal itself. Although the lack of consensus was regrettable, the Conference had provided a useful forum for an exchange of views on the issue. He trusted that the Conference on Disarmament would continue its work to achieve the goal of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

25. Mr. VALDERRAMA (Philippines) said that, as a sponsor of both the original and the revised version of the draft decision, his delegation had voted in favour of the draft, on the understanding that the consultations to be conducted by the President would include a working group to consider verification of compliance with a comprehensive test-ban treaty; ideally, the working group would meet during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. In addition, his delegation believed that the appropriate time for the resumption of the Amendment Conference would be no later than September 1993, or two years before the fifth and final review of the non-proliferation Treaty.

26. Mr. PAWLAK (Poland) said he regretted that, despite all efforts, it had been impossible to reach agreement on the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The decision just adopted did not offer a useful approach, and his delegation had therefore abstained in the vote.

27. Mr. KAYSER (Luxembourg) said that further negotiations would be needed in order to produce a comprehensive test-ban treaty. His delegation had abstained in the vote because it felt that the consultations in question must include all five major Powers and not just the three represented at the Conference.

28. Mr. FRANCESE (Italy) said that the Amendment Conference had proved useful as a review conference. Although his delegation had abstained in the vote because of the lack of consensus, it looked forward to future progress on a comprehensive test-ban treaty in the context of the Conference on Disarmament.

29. The PRESIDENT invited participants to take up consideration of the draft report of the Conference (PTBT/CONF/L.2).

30. He suggested that a new paragraph dealing with the draft decision just adopted should be inserted into part I of the report, after paragraph 23, under a heading reading "Decision of the Conference".

31. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Conference wished to adopt his suggestion.

32. It was so decided.

33. The PRESIDENT suggested the addition of a new paragraph 25 along the following lines: "At its 3rd meeting, on 18 January 1991, the Committee of the Whole adopted the draft report of the Conference, as contained in document PTBT/CONF/L.2.

34. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Conference wished to adopt that suggestion.

35. It was so decided.

36. Mr. KHERADI (Secretary-General of the Conference) said that after consultations it had been decided that the asterisk in current paragraph 24 was no longer needed and should therefore be omitted.

37. Mr. NAIMI-ARFA (Iran) proposed that a list of the countries that had participated in the general debate should be included in paragraph 19.

38. Mr. KHERADI (Secretary-General of the Conference) suggested that a text along the following lines should be inserted, as paragraph 19: "During the course of the general debate, which took place in plenary meetings from 8 to 11 January 1991 the following 63 States parties made statements". An appropriate list of States parties would follow. The next text for paragraph 19 would end with the following sentence: "In addition, Cameroon, a signatory State, also made a statement".

39. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Conference wished to adopt the new text for paragraph 19 suggested by the Secretary-General of the Conference.

40. It was so decided.

41. Mr. MELENDEZ (El Salvador) said that his delegation had not been included among the participants listed in current paragraph 24. The total number of participants was in fact 95, not 94.

42. The PRESIDENT said that an appropriate correction would be made in current paragraph 24.

43. Ms. HOINKES (United States of America) proposed that current paragraph 24 should also list the names of delegations that had made statements both before and after the vote.

44. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection he would take it that the Conference wished to adopt the proposal put forward by the representative of the United States.

45. It was so decided.

46. The draft report in document PTBT/CONF/L.2, as orally amended, was adopted.

47. Mr. GOLOVKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he regretted that the Conference had failed to reach a consensus. However, through the extensive exchange of views that had taken place, it had made a constructive contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive test ban. He hoped that a continuing political process would supplement negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament and the talks between the United States and the Soviet Union.

48. Mr. GROOP (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, said that, since there were deep divisions among delegations on the subject dealt with by the Conference, it should come as no surprise that States parties had concluded that further work needed to be undertaken before a consensus could be achieved on the question of a comprehensive test ban. The President had paved the way for a most useful discussion of compliance and verification problems relating to a test ban. The Conference had thus been able to engage experts in the field in a meaningful exchange of views, which would be continued elsewhere.

CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE

49. The PRESIDENT said that the cessation of nuclear testing by all States for all time was a vital global objective, one that needed to be pursued at various levels, but especially at the multilateral level, so that a comprehensive test ban, when achieved, would be universally supported. The Amendment Conference had contributed in a very important way to that objective by bringing States parties together for the first time to discuss the obstacles to agreement on the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons. It had been the result of several years of intensive efforts on the part of many States parties, and had been supported by a large segment of international public opinion. Out of that sustained effort and within the focus provided by the Amendment Conference, it had been possible to hold an invaluable exchange of views. As a result, the Conference had highlighted the urgent need to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

50. The purpose of the Conference had been to widen the scope of the partial test-ban Treaty to include underground nuclear testing and to ensure compliance - in other words, to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a viable and effective comprehensive test-ban treaty. The debate both in the plenary meeting and in the Committee of the Whole had shown that, while most States parties favoured the immediate conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the proposal for the amendment of the partial test-ban Treaty could not be accepted in terms of the requirements of article II of the Treaty. States parties acknowledged the complexity of such issues as verification and sanctions, but at the same time showed a firm and continuing commitment to the achievement of a comprehensive test ban.

51. He too would have wished to end the Conference's work with an agreement on substance, but none the less appreciated the constructive contributions that participants had made. The Conference had entrusted him with certain responsibilities, and he would fulfil them to the best of his ability. Despite the fact that the threat of nuclear confrontation had significantly diminished, nuclear weapons continued to be developed and refined, and weapons of mass destruction continued to accumulate. He therefore hoped that the work done by the Conference would be built upon, so that it would be possible to move forward with a renewed sense of urgency and responsibility.

52. After an exchange of courtesies, the PRESIDENT declared the Conference closed.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.